

Introduction

With globalization, people of diverse backgrounds get more and more opportunities to interact with each other. As Taiwan is becoming increasingly diverse, we need new knowledge about how to live with differences among people. Multicultural education attempts to provide an answer to the rising questions about diversity by examining fundamental issues in race, social class, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, and cultural identity (Sleeter & Grant, 1999; Tatum, 2003). Multicultural education is easily reduced to a celebration of food and festivals of culturally diverse students. Food and festivals do symbolize a culture in a way, but they can only represent one segment of a culture. They cannot reflect the core of multicultural education, which is to promote equity among people that are different from each other in various dimensions of life. For example, the second generation of new immigrants in Taiwan has gradually reached school age. Their diverse cultural background tends to be viewed as a barrier in their academic performance since their mothers may not be able to provide as much help as other mothers from the mainstream. Are they looked down upon by their teachers, peers and other parents? Whether they are treated fairly in school would be a great concern of multicultural education.

By getting to know one's position in different social structures such as social class and gender, an individual is more likely to become aware of how various structural constraints impact one's being in the world and interaction with others. In other words, multicultural issues are essentially sociocultural and philosophical. A multicultural education course should be able to challenge students' beliefs and attitudes toward human diversity (Gillett &



Boyle-Baise, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Sleeter, 2001). The consciousness of structural constraints will lead individuals to examine their own belief system and transform their frame of reference, i.e., how they view the world.

The need for knowledge about diversity has also been reflected in the curriculum of the higher education in Taiwan. Courses related to multicultural issues are offered at both graduate and undergraduate levels, academic and vocational tracks. This project explores the curriculum design and instructional practice of a multicultural education course offered at an institute of technology in southern Taiwan. It provides insights into the instructor's teaching philosophy and how it impacts the curriculum design. It also explores to which extent the instructional practice challenges students' beliefs and attitudes toward human diversity. It attempts to improve the curriculum design based on the study outcomes. The results of this study will not only help the instructor improve the future curriculum but also illustrate to other multicultural educators what a multicultural curriculum may involve.

The significance of this study lies in several areas. First, it promotes understanding of how a multicultural course is designed and carried out at a higher education setting. Second, this may encourage more research on multicultural education. Multicultural issues are not a remote construct but embodied in various forms in our lives. The course aims at helping students realize the significance of events in life and become more aware of the sociocultural context each event is located. Such reflections are an important drive for social betterment. Third, the project deals with a timely topic in Taiwan. Foreign laborers, new immigrants, the second generation of new immigrants all help diversify the society of Taiwan. Rather than learning each individual culture, students are encouraged to examine their own value